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Pitcairn

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 11 January 2016. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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The Territory at a glance

Territory: Pitcairn is a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Representative of administering Power: High Commissioner: Jonathan Sinclair.

Geography: Pitcairn is located midway between Australia and the continent of South America at 25°S and 130°W. It comprises four islands: Pitcairn (the only inhabited island), Henderson, Ducie and Oeno.

Land area: 35.5 km^2 (Pitcairn Island: 4.35 km^2).

Exclusive economic zone: 800,000 km^2.

Population: 39 (2015); this figure does not include the 10 individuals currently abroad.

Life expectancy at birth: Not available.

Languages: The official languages are English and Pitkern, a mixture of eighteenth-century English and Tahitian.

Capital: Adamstown, the only settlement.

Mayor: Shawn Christian (as from 1 January 2014).

Main political parties: None.

Elections: Elections of the Island Council are held every two years (most recent election: November 2015); elections for the Mayor, the head of the Council, are held every three years.

Economy: The economy of Pitcairn is based largely on fishing, horticulture, the sale of handicrafts, beekeeping and honey production. Pitcairn receives budgetary aid from the United Kingdom.

Monetary unit: New Zealand dollar ($NZ).

Brief history: Pitcairn is named after Robert Pitcairn, a British midshipman who sighted it in 1767. The island was uninhabited when castaways from HMS *Bounty* (9 mutineers and 18 Polynesians) arrived there in 1790. Most of the inhabitants of Pitcairn today can trace their ancestry back to those mutineers.

I. Constitutional, legal and political issues

1. A new constitution came into effect in March 2010, replacing the Pitcairn Order 1970 and the Pitcairn Royal Instructions 1970. The Governor is appointed by the British Crown. In practice, the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to New Zealand is appointed concurrently as Governor of Pitcairn, and overall responsibility for the administration of the island is accordingly vested in this function.

2. Under the Constitution, the Governor may make laws for the peace, order and good government of Pitcairn after consultation with the Island Council. Laws enacted by the Governor are styled ordinances. All ordinances are subject to disallowance by the British monarch, on the advice of the Secretary of State. The Government of the United Kingdom retains the general power to legislate directly for Pitcairn by an Act of Parliament or an Order in Council.

3. Islanders manage their internal affairs through the Island Council, the existence of which is enshrined in the Constitution and the composition and functions of which are established by the Local Government Ordinance (Laws of Pitcairn 2014 Revised edition). The Ordinance confers upon the Council the duty, subject to orders and directions of the Governor, to provide for the enforcement of the laws of Pitcairn, and empowers it to make regulations for the good administration of Pitcairn, the maintenance of peace, order and public safety and the social and economic advancement of the islanders. According to the 2014 revised edition of the Ordinance, the Council consists of seven voting members (the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and five Councillors, all elected) and four non-voting ex officio members (the Governor, the Deputy Governor, the Administrator (a role created in December 2014) and the Commissioner). During elections held in November 2013, Shawn Christian was elected as Mayor.

A. Electoral qualifications

4. In order to vote for Island Officers, persons must be at least 18 years old, intend to remain on Pitcairn indefinitely and have been resident there for a specified period: one year if the person has a right of abode on Pitcairn or a spouse of someone otherwise entitled to vote; two years if a de facto partner of a person otherwise entitled to vote; or three years if normally resident on Pitcairn. Anyone who is eligible to vote may also stand for election to any of the island offices, so long as he or she has not been sentenced to imprisonment for three months or more in the past five years. The Island Secretary prepares the register of voters in September of each election year, and elections are held between the first and fifteenth days in November (inclusive).

B. Judicial system and human rights

5. The Island Magistrate is appointed by the Governor from among the residents of Pitcairn. Other magistrates, legally qualified in a Commonwealth country, are appointed to preside over the Magistrate's Court in matters beyond the powers of the Island Magistrate. The Magistrate's Court sits with two Assessors, except in specified circumstances. The jurisdiction of the Magistrate's Court is limited to

offences triable summarily or either way, to committal proceedings and certain inquiries; and the magistrates have prescribed limits on their sentencing powers. The Magistrate's Court has jurisdiction in civil litigation up to a prescribed level. There is a right of appeal to the Supreme Court of Pitcairn, which is a superior court of record and has jurisdiction in criminal and civil cases beyond the competence of the Magistrate's Court. The Supreme Court is constituted by a judge sitting alone. The judges of the Supreme Court are the Chief Justice and up to four other judges. The Supreme Court may sit with assessors, if it thinks it expedient or practical to do so. There are further rights of appeal to the Pitcairn Court of Appeal, which is comprised of a President, two or more Justices of Appeal and the Chief Justice, and to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

6. The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction over alleged breaches of the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution. It has power to make such declarations and orders as it considers appropriate for the purpose of upholding the rights, and may award damages. The Governor, as holder of the highest executive office, and the Chief Justice, as head of the judiciary, are responsible within their respective spheres of authority for overseeing the implementation of human rights on Pitcairn.

7. A child safety review conducted in 2015, highlighted the need for continued safeguarding measures on the island. In addition, 11 islanders graduated from the Child Protection Studies programme, a training course accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, between 2011 and 2013.

8. At the fourth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, held in London on 1 and 2 December 2015, the United Kingdom and overseas territory leaders agreed upon a communiqué in which they had committed to further joint work to extend the core United Nations Human Rights Conventions to the territories, where those had not been extended already and stated that the Government of the United Kingdom had undertaken to ensure that pending requests from the Territories would be taken forward as soon as possible.

II. Budget

9. According to the United Kingdom, the 2014-2015 expenditure for Pitcairn, supported by the Department for International Development (DFID), was some £2.9 million. According to the Department, the budgetary aid covers citizens' reasonable assistance needs, ensuring the maintenance of a range of basic public services (e.g., electricity and telecommunications) and the provision of part-time public sector employment. Budget aid is also used for medical and educational services, as well as a shipping service that provides a necessary lifeline in terms of freight and passenger services. The prospect of self-sufficiency is very low in the case of Pitcairn because of its size and remoteness. The island's budget aid has increased by about 220 per cent over the past seven years, owing mainly to the cost of the new shipping service introduced in 2008, the associated costs of the four expatriate professionals (police officer, family and community adviser, teacher and doctor) and exchange rate fluctuations. The major recurrent expenditures include shipping and freight subsidies and the costs of off-island professionals who are employed to ensure continued child safeguarding and other matters — medical, police, teaching and social welfare. The territorial allocation provided for Pitcairn under the ninth European

Development Fund, which ran from 2008 to 2013, amounted to €2.4 million. Under the tenth European Development Fund, which covers the period 2014-2020, Pitcairn will be granted an indicative amount of €2.4 million.

III. Economic and social conditions

10. The principal source of income for the public economy had traditionally been the sale of stamps. Owing largely to a downturn in the stamp market, however, the island now receives budgetary assistance from the Department for International Development. A scaled-down stamp trade continues nonetheless, with six or seven new stamp issues released each year. Pitcairn coins (New Zealand mint) are another collectors' item. Revenue is also generated from landing fees for tourist arrivals.

11. The Territory's income is also supplemented by the sale of Internet domain names. Internet users worldwide can acquire a ".pn" suffix that is permanently awarded to Pitcairn for, according to the territorial Government, a fee of US$ 100 per year or US$ 10 per month. Also available for purchase are the subdomains ".co.pn", ".net.pn" and ".org.pn", which cost US$ 50 per year.

12. The private economy of Pitcairn is based on the manufacture and sale of handicrafts, some of which are available directly through the Internet. Bartering, mainly with passing ships, is also an important part of the economy. The island's fertile soil produces a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. Some islanders also provide a homestay service to tourists. Pitcairn has no hotels or motels. The Pitcairn Island Producers' Cooperative, established in 1999, promotes and coordinates the distribution of honey and honey products. According to data from the Commonwealth Secretariat, a range of minerals, including manganese, iron, copper, gold, silver and zinc, have been discovered within the exclusive economic zone of Pitcairn.

13. DFID and the Government of Pitcairn have developed a five-year strategic development plan, covering the period 2012-2016, which sets out the views and aspirations of the islanders for the socioeconomic development of Pitcairn. It is based largely on efforts to boost revenue by increasing tourism, small business development and honey production. It is a living document and is frequently updated.

14. Three main challenges to socioeconomic development have been identified by the Department for International Development: the legacy of the child sexual abuse cases and the continuing need to maintain rigorous child protection measures; the ageing population and the declining share of the population that is economically active; and the lack of migration to the island.

15. With regard to the first challenge, and according to Pitcairn budget aid 2015/2016, the administering Power has put in place interventions to create a substantial child safeguarding framework and independent reviews have taken place in 2009, 2011 and 2013. The review recommended continued United Kingdom Government leadership and responsibility for overseeing child safety on Pitcairn, continued appropriate vetting of any adults intending to move to Pitcairn, the integration of child safeguarding into all future development planning for Pitcairn, regular review of children's development and circumstances, and the continued management and monitoring of known sex offenders. The review also explicitly

recommended that off-island professionals continue to be employed to implement child safeguarding procedures and protocols, with oversight by the administering Power.

16. Regarding the second challenge and according to Pitcairn budget aid 2015/2016, of the resident population of 39, there are only 27 in paid employment that fall into the potentially economically active category with only 9 of this paid employment group under 50, of whom only 3 are in the 20-30 age group (and one of this group has been off the island for some considerable time). There are currently 22 people on the island over 50, 11 of whom are over 65. By 2025 the age dependency ratio (those under 18 and over 65 compared to the productive population) is expected to be over 100 per cent in comparison to the current ratio of 58 per cent. The situation is having an increasingly negative impact on economic production and health-care costs. The natural growth rate of the population is already beyond a sustainable replacement rate. In the period 2001-2012, there were only eight births and fewer than five women of childbearing age. The Department further notes that considering that there are only three options for increasing the population — children being born to islanders, the return of some of the diaspora and/or immigration to the island — this will continue to be a consideration in socioeconomic development planning for the foreseeable future. The implications of an ageing population for future budget aid rounds are that increasing funds will be required in the medium-term to assist the ageing population.

17. With respect to the third challenge, in the second half of 2013, a survey was launched to ascertain whether members of the diaspora had any interest in returning to the Territory and the factors conditioning a decision.

18. According to the final report of the survey, presented in January 2014 by a consultancy firm, the overall response rate was 28 per cent (33 of 120 households). The following three barriers to potential returns were identified: the legacy of the child sexual abuse cases, acceptance of outsiders and new ideas and accessibility. No significant interest among members of the diaspora in returning to or investing in Pitcairn was identified, with only three respondents signalling an interest in living on Pitcairn permanently.

19. It was found that the child sexual abuse cases had created a clear reluctance on the part of members of the diaspora to publicly identify themselves as being from Pitcairn and sullied the Territory's reputation. The view was that on-island social norms did not conform to acceptable international norms. Reference was made to multigenerational (long-standing) inappropriate social behaviour. The survey also identified negative perceptions around the ability to bring children to the Territory and concerns regarding child protection issues. The need for a community reconciliation process was also identified. According to the administering Power and as of December 2015, this was proceeding well.

20. It was noted that acceptance of outsiders was a complex matter. There was a strong belief that outsiders were not welcomed and would not be able to integrate. Acceptance of outsiders with regard to being eligible and selected for government employment, or introducing and/or expanding businesses, governance issues and the need for better structures and qualified people were also flagged as areas of concern.

21. It was also noted that accessibility was repeatedly mentioned as a barrier to immigration, especially in relation to factors such as health (medical evacuations), education and general isolation, an aspect that according to the administering Power is being looked into (as of December 2015).

22. The repopulation plan, covering the period 2014-2019, prepared by the Island Council, was aimed at attracting and retaining migrants and, to ensure its success, addressing areas such as housing, education and health. This has now been superseded by a new Repopulation Strategy. Like its predecessor this new strategy recognizes the paramount importance of encouraging new migrants to Pitcairn to settle or work. The plan is expected to evolve and be updated as the project develops. In line with the Strategic Development Plan, the Island Council approved in September 2015 an immigration policy designed to further promote immigration and repopulation, bringing people with the necessary skills and commitment to Pitcairn.

23. According to the Department for International Development, in designing Pitcairn budget aid intervention, it considered the likely effect in reducing gender inequality. The Department also manages the key gender issue on the Territory which is the legacy of child abuse ensuring that robust child safeguarding mechanisms are in place. The budget aid intervention also provides for services equally for all islanders with specific attention for the needs of children and the elderly, as well as support and care for those with mental health issues.

A. Transport

24. Access to Pitcairn is possible only by sea. Currently, a shipping service runs from Mangareva in French Polynesia to the island eight times a year, with four freight runs directly from New Zealand. Cruise ships also call during the tourism season, which lasts from December to March. Ships visiting the island remain at anchor some distance from the shoreline and visitors are ferried to the island in longboats. According to information provided by the Government of the United Kingdom, plans are being taken forward to improve landing facilities, in particular for cruise ship passengers; given that tourism development is important for the future prosperity of Pitcairn. According to the European Union, an alternative landing facility, supported by the European Development Fund, is being constructed and is nearly complete.

B. Communications and power supply

25. The communications system installed in 2006 provided the island with telephones in all homes, a stable Internet system and limited television service and videoconferencing facilities. The system was upgraded in 2011. Currently, diesel-driven generators provide 240-volt electric power for 15 hours per day (7 a.m.-10 p.m.).

C. Land tenure

26. A land tenure reform ordinance was enacted at the end of 2006 to ensure that every islander was entitled to an allocation of house, garden, orchard and forestry land. According to the administering Power, this will be reviewed in the near future. More detailed information on land distribution issues is provided in the 2005 working paper (A/AC.109/2005/10).

D. Employment

27. The population of Pitcairn is self-employed, but salaries are paid to members of the community who participate in local government activities. Under the new governance structure, introduced in April 2009, most of the inhabitants have at least one part-time government job. Public work, recently renamed "civic obligations", required by law of all men and women between 15 and 65 years of age, is partly a relic of the society created by the mutineers and partly a necessity born of the basically tax-free economy. The most essential traditional public duties concern Bounty Bay: the maintenance of public boats and the unloading of supplies. Public works not relating to Bounty Bay are now rarely carried out. There are no banking facilities, but undated personal cheques and traveller's cheques may be cashed at the Government Treasurer's office. In November 2015, the Island Council approved an "Employment Policy" and an "Employment Guidance". The policy is intended to support the ability of the Government of Pitcairn to meet its objectives within the Strategic Development Plan and provides a solid platform for the recruitment, performance management, disciplinary procedures and dispute resolution within the Pitcairn Public Service. Also in November 2015 an "Occupational Health and Safety Policy" was approved by the Island Council. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all employees, contractors and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities to the Government of Pitcairn and are committed to ensuring the health and well-being of employees, contractors, volunteers and the Pitcairn Island community.

E. Education

28. Education is free and compulsory for all children between 5 and 15 years of age. The only school was completely rebuilt in 2006. Instruction is in English and based on the New Zealand standard curriculum. The Education Officer is a qualified teacher recruited from New Zealand, usually for a one-year term. For practical reasons, post-primary education is conducted at the school by correspondence courses arranged through the Ministry of Education of New Zealand. Overseas secondary education is encouraged through the granting of bursaries, and a number of pupils have received secondary education in New Zealand at the expense of the Government of Pitcairn. Since 2007, citizens from the overseas territories have benefited from the home student fee rate at British universities. In August 2015 the Island Council approved an Education Policy to provide equal and impartial educational opportunities for the Pitcairn Islands community.

29. Pitcairn has a museum, which was built using funds from a grant from the Government of the United Kingdom. Artefacts on display include stone tools made by Polynesians before the arrival of the mutineers, together with cannonballs, an

anchor and a swivel gun from HMS *Bounty*. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church is the only church on the island.

F. Health care

30. A general practitioner is stationed on the island on a one-year contract, assisted by an assistant nurse. The Government of the United Kingdom has also funded a social welfare programme, which includes a family and community adviser. As on other Pacific islands, obesity and diabetes are health problems.

31. In a communiqué dated 5 December 2012, the Joint Ministerial Council, a body that brings together political leaders and representatives of the United Kingdom and its overseas territories, including Pitcairn, expressed agreement on the importance of health security and on achieving compliance with the requirements of the International Health Regulations, an international legal instrument binding on 194 countries, including all States members of the World Health Organization, by June 2014. At the time of writing, it was not known whether that goal had been achieved, in particular with regard to Pitcairn. Furthermore, the participants agreed to identify and make use of all available sources of assistance, in particular from regional and global health organizations, such as the Pan American Health Organization and United Nations agencies, to share best practices on health strategies and processes, with special emphasis on the treatment of non-communicable diseases, and to improve representation of the territories and linkages with global and regional health bodies.

32. According to the World Health Organization Multi-Country Cooperation Strategy for the Pacific 2013-2017, the leading causes of morbidity on Pitcairn include diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, allergies and asthma, and accidents. Pitcairn actively participates in the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network and closely monitors communicable diseases. Primary health care is available and accessible to all residents. Health care is financed by the Department for International Development. A growing health-related challenge is the extension of periods of drought. The health centre is equipped with a well-stocked dispensary and X-ray technology. The health worker-to-population ratio is 1:52, both for the only doctor and for the sole dental technician.

G. Criminal justice

33. According to the United Kingdom, the criminal justice system on Pitcairn is administered through a combination of on-island and off-island processes. Criminal law is contained in local ordinances and regulations, as well as in English law of general application. Charges are laid by a police officer or the public prosecutor. Pitcairn has two police officers: a community police officer appointed from among the island residents and an officer who is recruited from New Zealand, usually for a period of 12 months. The public prosecutor is a lawyer qualified in a Commonwealth country.

34. A public defender is appointed by the Governor to represent defendants in criminal cases, and legal aid is available to any person who has insufficient means to obtain legal representation. A publicly funded community lawyer has also been appointed.

35. More minor criminal matters involving breaches of local ordinances or regulations can be heard before the Island Magistrate. Other summary offences and committal proceedings may be heard before the off-island magistrates in the Magistrate's Court. Magistrates must sit with assessors, selected randomly from among the island residents, for all criminal cases with penalties of more than $NZ 400, unless the defendant has admitted guilt or there are no eligible assessors. Indictable offences must be heard in the Supreme Court.

36. The Magistrate's Court and the Supreme Court may sit in Pitcairn, New Zealand, the United Kingdom or elsewhere. To allow for the distances and difficulty of travel to and from Pitcairn, a judge may order that a person involved in a proceeding participate by live video link. In making an order, the judge is required to give particular consideration to the impact of this on the defendant's right to a fair trial. Appeals can be made to the Court of Appeal and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Work is currently being carried out to further improve criminal procedure and the accessibility of the law and the courts.

IV. Environment

37. Water quality testing is carried out in all residential and government buildings, and data are recorded. Leaf catchers, first flush diverters and gutter guards have been installed at all residential and government buildings to reduce contaminates. Water flow measurement data are collected from various springs and the secretariat of the Pacific Community is assisting in collating the data and providing technical assistance. A total of 240 water tanks, with a total storage capacity of 1.4 million litres, have been provided, for an overall increase of 268,000 litres. Weather observations are collected on a daily basis, and weather data has been collected since 1945. The secretariat of the Pacific Community provides technical assistance with graphs and averages.

38. According to the Pitcairn strategic development plan, the Island Council, in partnership with the Pew Charitable Trusts and the National Geographic Society, both based in the United States of America, submitted in November 2012 a report to the Government of the United Kingdom that proposed the creation of the world's largest no-take marine reserve, an area that would encompass the entirety of the exclusive economic zone of the Pitcairn Islands, with the exception of a 12-mile radius surrounding Pitcairn that would allow the development of commercial fishing activities.

39. The report, prepared for submission to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom and published in May 2013, detailed how the monitoring and enforcement of the exclusive economic zone could effectively be undertaken for a relatively low level of expenditure and outlined the most important steps that could be taken to create a robust enforcement system. The report also reviewed some affordable technologies that could be deployed to support the zone. According to the report, creating a marine reserve and deploying those relatively low-cost options would provide protection for the zone that would be far better than that provided for the vast majority of oceans worldwide. It was stated that those actions would distinguish the United Kingdom as a world leader in the responsible stewardship of the marine environment.

40. In the view of the Pew Charitable Trusts, the purpose of the marine reserve would be to fully protect the special marine environment and to provide a world-class, fully protected marine reserve in order to attract scientific research, non-consumptive tourism and other non-extractive economic uses and favourable global recognition for Pitcairn. If approved, it would become the world's largest marine reserve, encompassing more than 800,000 km^2; all fishing and the extraction of other natural resources would be prohibited, with the exception of local traditional fishing. Any vessels entering or passing through the exclusive economic zone would have to comply with specific provisions. A review of the marine reserve would be undertaken every 10 years. According to the administering Power, the United Kingdom Government has officially declared its intention to create the Pitcairn Marine Protected Area. As of December 2015, research on surveillance and enforcement was under way.

41. In January 2014, a United Kingdom House of Commons environmental audit committee issued a report entitled "Sustainability in the United Kingdom overseas territories", which identified a number of financial and institutional concerns regarding threats to unique habitats and species and regarding the protection of biodiversity in the overseas territories.

42. In its report, the committee stated that, during its inquiry, the Government of the United Kingdom had expressed general but unspecified aspirations to cherish the environment in the overseas territories, but had been unwilling to acknowledge or address its responsibilities under United Nations treaties. That was found to be disappointing, because the environment in the overseas territories was globally significant and constituted 90 per cent of the biodiversity for which the Government had responsibility. According to the committee, the Government had failed to negotiate the extension of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the flagship United Nations policy on biodiversity protection, to all the overseas territories and had not ensured the accurate monitoring of biodiversity there. The committee said that, in environmental terms, the report on the overseas territories, published in 2012, was considered a missed opportunity.

43. A goat eradication programme was carried out in May 2014, although some goats were left for pets or food.

44. The United Kingdom Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy has been devised as a key tool to enable the United Kingdom and overseas territorial Governments to meet the relevant international obligations for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. In April 2014, a report was published about ongoing and planned activities that are supported by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom, as well as its statutory adviser the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, in each of the areas under the Strategy. It was noted that the Government of the United Kingdom had awarded £249,946 through the Darwin Initiative to develop a sustainable marine and fisheries management plan for Pitcairn. The project, led by the University of Dundee, will produce a fully operational fisheries and marine management plan that is ecosystem-based and sustainable, which is crucial to providing a secure future for the community and protecting the unique marine biodiversity of Pitcairn. According to the administering Power, this project was near completion as of December 2015.

45. The uninhabited island of Henderson, designated a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1988, is the largest of the group and the richest in natural resources of the three satellite islands. Environmentalists visit Henderson from time to time, given that it is known for its endemic species of birds and plants in a near-pristine system. In 2011, a non-governmental organization led a project to eradicate rats, which were threatening the bird population. However, the project, to which the Government of the United Kingdom contributed more than £400,000, was unsuccessful and rats remain on the island. The Government of the United Kingdom and the relevant stakeholders are investigating. A monitoring expedition was conducted from September to November 2015 to assess the situation. Oeno is an important breeding site for seabirds.

V. Relations with international organizations and partners

46. Since January 2014, Pitcairn has been a partner under decision 2013/755/EU of the Council of the European Union of 25 November 2013 on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the Union, approved, inter alia, in an effort to move away from a classic development cooperation approach to a reciprocal partnership that promotes sustainable development and the values and standards of the Union in the wider world.

47. Pitcairn is a member of the Pacific Community, which is the oldest and largest organization in the 10-member Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific, a consultative process that is headed at the political level by the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat. The secretariat of the Pacific Community provides technical assistance, policy advice, training and research services to 22 Pacific island countries and territories in such areas as health, human development, agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Pitcairn also participates in the Pacific Community Coastal Fisheries Programme. According to the Department for International Development, the following international conventions apply to Pitcairn: European Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Pitcairn Island Council is currently considering making a request for the extension of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to Pitcairn in discussion with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

VI. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

48. The most recent statement by a representative of the island's Mayor was made during the Pacific regional seminar on advancing the decolonization process in the Pacific region, held in Madang, Papua New Guinea, from 18 to 20 May 2004. The statement is summarized in the report of the Special Committee on the Situation

with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2004 (A/59/23).

B. Position of the administering Power

49. On 15 October 2015, at the 7th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) during the seventieth session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of the Government of the United Kingdom with its overseas territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each territory to choose to remain British. The Government of the United Kingdom and its territories recognized that their relationship brought mutual benefits and responsibilities.

50. He went on to say that, since the publication in June 2012 by the Government of the United Kingdom of a white paper entitled *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability*, the United Kingdom had worked closely with its territories to further develop those partnerships. His Government had consolidated the annual meeting with the leaders of territories into a Joint Ministerial Council, with a clear mandate to review and implement the strategy and commitments set forth in the paper. His Government's fundamental responsibility and objective under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, was to ensure the security and good governance of the territories and their people.

51. At the fourth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, held in London on 1 and 2 December 2015, the United Kingdom and overseas territory leaders agreed on a communiqué setting out, among other things, the joint position of the United Kingdom and the overseas territories on self-determination. In the communiqué, the political leaders and representatives stated that leaders of the overseas territories were democratically elected by the people of the Territories and were accountable to them and that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, applied to the peoples of the overseas territories. They reaffirmed the importance of promoting the right of the peoples of the territories to self-determination, a collective responsibility of all parts of the Government of the United Kingdom. They committed to explore ways in which the overseas territories could maintain international support in countering hostile sovereignty claims and agreed that the fundamental structure of their constitutional relationships had been the right one — powers had been devolved to the elected Governments of the territories to the maximum extent possible consistent with the United Kingdom retaining those powers necessary to discharge its sovereign responsibilities — while agreeing to the need to review the effectiveness of constitutional arrangements over time.

VII. Action taken by the General Assembly

52. On 9 December 2015, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolutions 70/102 A and B, on the basis of the report of the Special Committee the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2015 (A/70/23) and on the

subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. Section VIII of resolution 70/102 B concerns Pitcairn. In that section, the Assembly:

(a) Welcomed all efforts by the administering Power and the territorial Government that would further devolve operational responsibilities to the Territory, with a view to gradually expanding self-government, including through training of local personnel;

(b) Requested the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter, and in that regard called upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

(c) Also requested the administering Power to continue its assistance for the improvement of the economic, social, educational and other conditions of the population of the Territory and to continue its discussions with the territorial Government on how best to support socioeconomic and environmental security in Pitcairn, including concerning demographic matters;

(d) Welcomed the work carried out on the preparation of the five-year strategic development plan for the island.